

Board Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

July 19, 2016

Members in Attendance:

Supervisor John Foust, Chair
Chairman Sharon Bulova
Supervisor John Cook
Supervisor Penny Gross
Supervisor Pat Herrity
Supervisor Catherine Hudgins
Supervisor Jeff McKay
Supervisor Kathy Smith
Supervisor Linda Smyth
Supervisor Dan Storck

Members Absent: None.

Deputy County Executive: Edward L. Long Jr. and Robert A. Stalzer (Deputy).

TAC Member in Attendance: Jeff Parnes, Chair.

Supervisor Foust called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the May 24, 2016, meeting were accepted unanimously.

2. FAA Changes to Flight Patterns

Margaret McKeough of Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and Noelle Dominguez, FCDOT, briefed the Board on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s changes to flight patterns at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). The FAA has exclusive control of airspace and aircraft (flight paths and altitudes). The airlines are responsible for managing their individual flight schedules and aircraft fleet mix. Local government jurisdictions are responsible for land-use zoning around airports. MWAA is responsible for airport facility development, maintenance and leasing. MWAA oversees DCA Nighttime Noise Rule; identifies compliant and non-compliant aircraft based on FAA's Noise Certification data for each aircraft type, model, engine and weight; and levies civil penalties on non-compliant aircraft that operate between 10 pm to 6:59 am.

DCA has experienced growth in demand for air travel between 10 pm to 7 am. The FAA continues the implementation of its Next Generation Air Transportation System program (NextGen) to improve airspace safety and efficiency. The procedural changes have resulted in additional complaints from residents living in proximity to flight corridor changes, locally and nationally. Historically, the Potomac and Anacostia River Corridors have been the recommended flight paths

since jets began operating at DCA in 1966. With the NextGen procedure changes, flight paths are more precise and concentrated resulting in more noise complaints from certain areas in Fairfax County.

MWAA has facilitated discussions with citizens, FAA and the airlines to address noise issues through the DCA Community Noise Working Group. The Working Group includes representatives appointed by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and representatives from the airline industry. The Working Group will make noise-abatement recommendations to the FAA for consideration and discuss opportunities to minimize impacts on neighborhoods. MWAA requested airlines to reduce or eliminate louder aircraft operating at DCA, as well as the implementation of flight procedures that “Maximize Over Water, Minimize Over Land” flight times.

Supervisor Storck thanked Ms. McKeough for her presentation and stated that people are upset about the noise and the lack of public engagement in changing FAA flight patterns at DCA. He stated that the feedback from citizens, especially from the Mount Vernon area, is important. However, it was not taken into consideration by the FAA and MWAA when they changed the flight patterns. He asked for reconfirmation of the amount of time of FAA’s procedure-changing process. Ms. McKeough replied that it could take from 12 to 18 months for FAA to complete the changes. She said that FAA will hold public meetings for any flight pattern changes at DCA.

Supervisor McKay inquired about the number of citations of night time noise violations. Ms. McKeough replied that there were 37 violations in 2015. The number of violations is higher than the previous year, but not significantly. Regarding the question about the type of aircraft used by the airlines, Ms. McKeough stated that MWAA cannot require the airlines not to fly a certain type of aircraft. The airlines decide which aircraft to fly depending on their fleet mix and schedules. MWAA is working with the airlines on the issue of an aircraft’s noise. MWAA can issue citations for airlines that violate the maximum weight restrictions of an aircraft. Weight is measured after an aircraft has landed. After receiving a citation from MWAA may have to pay a fine of \$5,000 per violation.

Chairman Bulova stated that the decision to change the flight patterns is a FAA, and not MWAA decision. She thanked MWAA for initiating the round table discussions to address community concerns on the noise issue and changes in flight patterns. She stated that her appointee, Ms. Carol Hawn of the Airports Advisory Committee, is her representative at the round table discussions. She also stated that the situation validated Fairfax County’s land-use planning policies of avoiding having residential uses under flight patterns at Dulles International Airport. Chairman Bulova directed staff to prepare a Board action item regarding the round table’s recommendations to change the south flow flight patterns for DCA for the Board’s consideration. Commissioner Parnes suggested that MWAA should have a discussion with the U.S. National Park Service about the flight pattern changes which would affect the historic George Washington’s Mount Vernon site.

3. Dulles Metrorail Silver Line Phase II Status and Funding

Mark Canale (FCDOT) and Joe LaHait (DMB) briefed the Board on the status of Phase II of the Dulles Rail Project. The Old Meadow Road realignment work is scheduled for completion by

April 2018. VDOT has approximately 1,600 items remaining on their punch list from Phase I. Currently, there is a disagreement between MWAA and VDOT about what should be on the list and what should not. Negotiations are continuing. The estimated cost for VDOT to complete the punch list and receive reimbursements from MWAA is approximately \$34 million. MWAA has not agreed to the VDOT cost estimate. VDOT and MWAA may have to contract a professional third-party firm to evaluate the disputed claims. The final budget for Phase I is \$2.982 billion.

Mr. Canale reported that Phase II is about 39 percent complete. The design is almost complete, and construction is 31 percent complete. Construction and/or utility work is underway at all stations in Fairfax County. The Ashburn Station in Loudoun County is in design. The design plans have been submitted for the rail yard at Dulles Airport. The Phase II budget is estimated at \$2.778 billion.

The total project estimate for the Herndon Station Garage is \$56.7 million. It is expected to be ready for occupancy by April 2019. The total project estimate for the Innovation Center Station Garage is \$57 million. It is expected to be ready for occupancy by April/May 2019. Mr. Canale presented photos of various activities for many stations and garages of the Silver Line Project. Supervisor Gross stated that there are men and women working on this project. She requested changing the term “man hours” in the presentation, and Mr. Canale agreed to change the term to “people hours”.

4. Snow Summit Follow Up and Ordinance Recommendations

James Patteson (DPWES), Tom Biesiadny and Neil Freschman (FCDOT) briefed the Board on the Snow Summit follow-up and ordinance recommendations. At the Snow Summit on March 1, 2016, many issues were discussed including: strengths of snow removal efforts, lessons learned from the Winter Storm Jonas on January 22-23, 2016, challenges, snow clearing of County assets, and comparison of local snow clearing ordinances in neighboring jurisdictions. The briefing highlighted opportunities for improvements such as, reconciliation of County and VDOT maps of secondary road ownership; pedestrian safety issues; Connector bus shelter snow removal; a new snow shoveling ordinance; avoiding dumping snow on trails, sidewalks and bus stops; snow emergency routes, and other issues.

Supervisor Foust stated that changes in signage will need input from the community regarding snow emergency routes. Regarding the issue of “orphan streets”, Mr. Biesiadny stated that staff have been working to compile the list and will update individual Supervisors. Supervisor Gross inquired what constitutes a “snow emergency route”. Mr. Freschman replied that a snow emergency route is defined by its purpose to allow emergency vehicles access in the event of a snow storm. There is no criteria in the ordinance regarding the definition of a snow emergency route except for interstate highways and primary arterial roads. Supervisor Gross raised an environmental concern regarding snow hauling. Mr. Biesiadny replied that VDOT is consulting with Arlington and Alexandria about their snow hauling policies. He stated staff is working to gather information on the cost of snow hauling and will report back to the Board. Supervisor Foust stated that VDOT should be hauling snow and not let snow pile up, especially at intersections where current practices are creating safety issues. He stated that it should not be Fairfax County’s

responsibility. Mr. Biesiadny replied that this issue is potentially something for the County to collaborate with VDOT.

5. Trail Lighting, Maintenance and Snow Removal

Mr. Biesiadny, William Marsh and James Patteson (DPWES), briefed the Board on the Trail Lighting, Maintenance and Snow Removal Project. Mr. Marsh began by describing the trail plan established for the new Silver Line stations in Tysons and their respective maintenance plans. The three new trails he described will connect the neighborhoods adjacent to Tysons to the Metrorail stations in Tysons. They include Vesper, Ashgrove and Scotts Run. These trails will serve as primary access for residents of neighboring communities to access Metrorail stations and jobs in Tysons.

One of DPWES's main objectives is to have staff compare existing DPWES-Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division (MSMD) and Capital Facilities priorities and budget, to the proposed trail scope of work for the three Tysons trails. MSMD's annual snow budget is \$1.3 million. Ongoing annual expense ranges from \$1.8 million to \$2.5 million for MSMD. Removing snow from the three trails will be a new responsibility for MSMD. Estimated snow removal cost for the three Tysons trails is approximately \$75,000 per year.

Mr. Marsh next discussed lighting operations for the County and the three Tysons trails. DPWES operates a countywide streetlight program via contract with Dominion Power and NOVEC. Estimated ongoing annual expense per year for Vesper Trail is about \$5,000. There is no estimate available for Scotts Run and Ashgrove Trail. The lighting for trails is not included in the County's contract with Dominion and will be a new responsibility for the County.

Mr. Marsh also stated that clearing snow for the three trails leading from trailheads in Tysons to Metrorail stations, will be given the same priority as clearing parking garages and sidewalks by County crews. The areas neighboring the Metrorail stations in Tysons will still need to be cleared by County crews and affected owners.

Staff is proposing a pilot program for the Vesper, Scotts Run, and Ashgrove Trails for snow clearing and lighting efforts that could be applied to other Metrorail stations areas in the future. Other existing trails near Metrorail stations could be considered for higher level of service following the pilot project. The third alternative is that the three Tysons trails could be cleared at a lower level of service and not be lit, resulting in less expense, but also less trail access during heavier snowfalls.

Chairman Bulova stated that she would be in favor of this trails pilot program, since the trails are part of the transportation network and not just for recreational purpose. Supervisor Hudgins agreed and highlighted the challenges of getting the trails completed. She asked if the County can get the contractors to perform this task. Mr. Patteson replied that the County has a contract agreement with Reston Association and contractors are allowed to do repairs and remove snow on the County trails.

Supervisor Smyth stated that trails need to be lighted and inquired about other trails that people have already been using. Supervisor McKay also shared his concerns with the condition of trails in his district and inquired how the County will pay for this project. Mr. Biesiadny replied that the problem exists countywide, but staff is suggesting three trails initiate this effort. Funding will come from the general fund in FY 2018. He also stated that existing Metrorail stations in Fairfax County have an ample number of parking spaces; however, the Metrorail stations in Tysons do not have parking. After discussion about the general condition of trails in Fairfax County, the Board directed staff to expand the scope of work to include trails in Tysons and other parts of the County and report back to the Board.

6. Parking Ordinance Update

Due to time constraints, this item was postponed until the next meeting. Staff will draft an ordinance recommendation for the Board's consideration at a future time.

7. Analysis of the Life Cycle Costs of Small vs. Large Transit Buses

Kris Miller and Jose Pineda (FCDOT) briefed the Board on the Analysis of the Life Cycle Costs of Small versus Large Transit Buses. The Board previously directed staff to conduct a comparison of life cycle costs for heavy-duty versus medium-duty transit buses.

Heavy-duty vehicles can be used for 12 years or 500,000 miles while medium-duty vehicles can be used for 7 years or 200,000 miles. Most transportation agencies use 12-year heavy-duty vehicles. Heavy-duty 12-year buses have several advantages over the heavy-duty 10-year and medium-duty 7-year buses such as, built-to-buyer specifications, better structural construction to improve safety, ride quality, overall vehicle weight reduction, and better ADA access, reliability and maintenance. A significant cost of maintaining a commercial bus fleet is the hiring and training of a technical work force. The heavy-duty 12-year bus manufacturers have in-house training departments and typically provide training on major bus systems as part of the bus purchase. The heavy-duty 10-year and medium-duty 7-year buses traditionally do not offer training with the purchase of these buses. Fairfax Connector maintains its heavy-duty buses for 15 years instead of 12 years. Fairfax Connector uses various bus sizes of the 12-year heavy-duty vehicles depending on route types.

A breakdown of life cycle costs indicates that the total cost per mile for heavy-duty 12-year buses or 15-year buses is about the same; \$1.09 for 12-year buses and \$1.01 for 15-year buses. The medium-duty 7-year has the highest total cost per mile of \$1.49. Past Fairfax Connector experience with medium-duty buses resulted in higher maintenance costs and poor reliability. These bus types are not designed or tested to take the place of heavy-duty buses and will not perform efficiently when used outside of their intended duty cycle. Fairfax Connector will continue to evaluate uses for various bus lengths in accordance with service demand and route types, as well as considering medium-duty buses with future route concepts such as flex routes.

Supervisor Gross thanked staff for their presentation. She inquired about how long it takes from planning to buy a new bus to the time when it goes into operational service. Ms. Miller replied that it will take from four to six months, and that is built into the replacement schedule. Mr.

Biesiadny explained that with the options in the County procurement process, the replacement will happen much quicker than starting from scratch, which could take up to 18 to 24 months.

The meeting ended at 5:25 pm. The next BTC meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2016, at 1 pm.